

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 USIA-06 PA-01 PRS-01
/060 W

-----101850Z 109431 /41

R 101738Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6367
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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TAGS: ELAB, GW, ILO
SUBJECT: PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF TRADE UNIONS,
MARCH 5-6, 1977

REF: GENEVA 1761

1. SUMMARY: THE SUBJECT PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CON-

ERENCE IN GENEVA RECEIVED LITTLE PRESS AND TV COVERAGE IN THE FRG WHICH MAY REFLECT THE SKEPTICAL REACTIONS OF THE DGB AND SPD TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO SOVIET DISSIDENT SACHAROV AND THE CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN EASTERN EUROPE. DGB PRESIDENT VETTER, WHO LED THE DGB DELEGATION TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THE DGB LINE THAT SUCH PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION MEETINGS "UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ILO REPRESENT A PRACTICAL WAY TO IMPLEMENT DETENTE AND COEXISTENCE." IN A RATHER NEBULOUS DGB STATEMENT COVERING THE MEETING, VETTER CLAIMED HE TOLD THE PARTICIPANTS THAT "THIS CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT MAKE FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGREEMENTS WHILE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTENT." THE DGB PRESS COVERAGE AND COMMENT ALSO DID NOT MENTION THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN EASTERN EUROPE OR THAT COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS PARTICIPATED IN THIS MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE OFFICIAL DGB COMMUNIQUE COVERING THIS MEETING WAS ENTITLED "ALL ARE ENDANGERED - VETTER DEMANDS A HUMANE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN GENEVA."

BEGIN TEXT: DGB PRESIDENT HEINZ OSKAR VETTER HAS CALLED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR A HUMANE WORK ENVIRONMENT. AT A CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS IN GENEVA LAST SATURDAY, VETTER SAID THAT DANGERS TO THE WORKING PEOPLE GO FAR BEYOND WHAT IS NOW CONSIDERED AS BELONGING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TRADITIONAL GROUP OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES IN THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES. NO COUNTRY HAS ESTABLISHED YET A SYSTEM TO COLLECT INFORMATION AND TO ELIMINATE DISEASES CAUSED BY WORK, AS WELL AS TO DETERMINE THE REASONS FOR SUCH DISEASES WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INSURE HUMANE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS.

REGARDLESS OF THE DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES ON THE SOLUTION OF THESE PROBLEMS, IT IS NECESSARY TO START A JOINT ACTION.

THE NEED FOR JOINT ACTION ALSO APPLIES TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS AND THE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

THE DGB PRESIDENT ALSO ADVOCATED MEASURES TO USE THE ILO MORE INTENSIVELY THAN BEFORE FOR THE REALIZATION OF TRADE UNION DEMANDS FOR MORE WORKER EDUCATION PROGRAMS. VETTER: "ACTUALLY, I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO

CONTACT THE ILO ESPECIALLY IN THE SPHERE OF WORKER
EDUCATION TO PUSH THROUGH OUR LONGSTANDING DEMANDS.
THE DISPROPORTIONATE ALLOCATIONS FOR PROGRAMS FOR
MANAGER TRAINING, ON THE ONE SIDE, AND VOCATIONAL EDU-
CATION AND WORKER EDUCATION, ON THE OTHER, BY NO MEANS
REPRESENT ACTUAL NEEDS." THE EXPANSION OF ILO-
SPONSORED WORKER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IS URGENTLY RE-
QUIRED SINCE THIS ORGANIZATION IS BEST SUITED TO PRO-
VIDE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BECAUSE IT HAS THE NECESSA-
RY TECHNICAL STAFF AVAILABLE. END TEXT.

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3. COMMENT: VETTER MUST KNOW THAT IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THESE PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION MEETINGS ARE HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ILO AS IS NOTED IN REFTEL. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUES TO ALLEGE THAT THE ILO IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR THESE MEETINGS TO DEFUSE DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF DGB COOPERATION WITH THESE SUCCESSFUL EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST LABOR INITIATIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN THE COMMUNIQUE STATES CLEARLY THAT THE AGREED FUTURE CONFERENCE "SHOULD BE HELD BEFORE THE THIRD EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ILO." THUS, THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO HAVE SUCCEEDED BY PERSISTENCE IN THEIR PURPOSE, AS EXPRESSED IN 1973-74 TO WEST EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONISTS, OF MAKING PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION MEETINGS A REGULAR FEATURE OUTSIDE REPEAT OUTSIDE THE ILO STRUCTURE.

IRONICALLY, THIS PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFERENCE BETWEEN NON-COMMUNIST AND COMMUNIST UNIONS IN GENEVA IGNORED THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN EASTERN EUROPE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SOVIET DISSIDENT AMALRIK WAS VISITING THE FRG TO TALK TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHANCELLOR, HANS-JUERGEN WISCHNEWSKI, AND THE SPD, AND WHILE IN WASHINGTON BUKOWSKI WAS MEETING WITH AFL-CIO PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY TO THANK THE AFL-CIO FOR ITS SOLIDARITY AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF SOVIET WORKERS. THE FACT THAT THE DGB DELEGATION DID NOT RAISE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN THIS MEETING INDICATES THAT THE DGB POLICY APPROACH TO DETENTE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN EASTERN EUROPE REMAINS UNCHANGED DESPITE AMALRIK'S VISIT TO THE FRG.

SINCE THE THEME OF HUMANIZING WORK ENVIRONMENT HAS BECOME A THEME FOR SOME PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION MEETINGS, WE HAVE ASKED SEVERAL OF OUR TRADE UNION AND

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LABOR MINISTRY SOURCES WHETHER ANY SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION OF VALUE TO WESTERN TRADE UNIONS HAS SURFACED IN THESE MEETINGS. FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ACTUALLY LITTLE INFORMATION OF VALUE HAS BEEN PRODUCED. RECENTLY, DURING THE VISIT OF SHELDON SAMUELS, AFL-CIO EXPERT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, DGB AND GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES SAID THAT THE SOVIETS ARE VERY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEST IN THIS PROBLEM AREA BUT THERE IS LITTLE RECIPROCITY IN TERMS OF INFORMATION OF VALUE PROVIDED BY THE SOVIETS TO THE FRG AND OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. SAMUELS SAID THE EXPERIENCE IN THE US HAD BEEN SIMILAR WITH MANY SOVIET REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ON US STUDIES, BUT WITH LITTLE RECIPROCITY IN TERMS OF SOVIET INFORMATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, LABOR UNIONS
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN04317
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: BONN
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 GENEVA 1761
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3154665
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF TRADE UNIONS, MARCH 5-6, 1977
TAGS: ELAB, GE, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38b8d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009